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ABSTRACT

The Haywood County Public Library (Waynesville, North Carolina) used a 1-year grant to strengthen a library-initiated adult literacy program by hiring a staff coordinator to develop techniques for recruiting students and tutors and raising funds in order to meet the community's adult literacy needs. The Adult Literacy Services Coordinator who was hired worked with the Haywood County Literacy Council to develop recruitment techniques and evaluate the council's work in order to gain local financial support. During the grant year (October 1, 1988-September 30, 1989), approximately 100 students were reached and 195 tutors were trained or located in the community. An ongoing process for interesting community businesses in literacy education has been initiated. In addition, other human service agencies have been involved, creating linkages that have been very important to the literacy program. The program began intergenerational efforts and worked on evaluation. Although the program did not meet its stated numerical goal (150 students served), it has grown and prospered. (KC)

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# FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
## LSCA TITLE VI
## Period Ending September 30, 1989

GRANTEE: HAYWOOD COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
402 S. HAYWOOD STREET
WAYNESVILLE, NC 28786

REPORT WRITER: KATHERINE Y. ARMITAGE
704-452-5169

GRANT NUMBER: R167A80123

GRANT AMOUNT: $23,264

AMOUNT EXPENDED: $22,869

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In 1987 when we applied for our first LSCA VI grant, we wrote, "The intent of this project is not to develop yet another adult literacy program for the community. Rather it is designed to strengthen a library initiated program that has a core of volunteer tutors but lacks the staff to develop techniques for recruitment of students, tutors, and finances which are necessary if the program is to be a viable one that grows to meet the adult literacy needs of the community."

To accomplish the above, we hired an Adult Literacy Services Coordinator to work exclusively with the Haywood County Literacy Council, an organization initiated by the library and housed in the library. Specifically, we asked this person to help with the development of techniques to recruit students and tutors and with the evaluation of the work of the council which, in turn, would make it easier for the council to gain local financial support for its

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continued existence.

The addition of a library staff member to work with the literacy council has meant the survival and growth of the council which, as the result of the coordinator's and the volunteers' work, is now very much a part of the fabric of the community. With our second year grant we are building on what we learned during the 1988-89 grant year. I want to begin this performance report by talking about some of those lessons.

First, we learned that our goal of having 150 students enrolled by the end of the grant period was too ambitious. We have reached approximately 100 students during this period and numbers beyond that would have exceeded our capabilities this first year. Even with this number, we have had a few waiting periods for students--and with more, the waiting periods would have been greater, as would have been the frustration levels and drop out rates for those waiting to be tutored. While we have 195 trained tutors in the community (only 5 short of our goal for the grant period), matching tutor and student is often not easy because of varying schedules and individual preferences. In addition, some of the people trained have decided not to tutor.

Second, we learned that enlisting the support of businesses, schools, and prison officials to encourage their promotion of free tutoring for employees, students, and inmates is an ongoing process that takes continued efforts

of not just the coordinator but council board members as well. This process, which we had hoped to have well established by the end of the grant period, has certainly begun, with varying progress, but by no means can we say that the promotion among these groups is what we hoped for by this time.

Third, we learned that the success of the literacy program depends almost as much on the involvement of other human service agencies in the community as it does on the literacy council itself. Personnel in these agencies are the people who come face to face with the problem of illiteracy every day and, in their positions, can be instrumental in getting prospective students and the council connected. Their involvement in the recruitment effort is more crucial than any volunteer or board member of the council itself. Therefore, the importance of building and maintaining linkages with other human services agencies cannot be overestimated.

Fourth, we learned a lot about the inter-generational nature of illiteracy in our community and the need to address this reality through work with children and/or families.

Fifth, we learned that evaluation is a difficult and complex process--that "success" has a number of definitions, depending on the students' own goals. Do we measure success by the council's own standardized measurements or by the student's goal for him/herself? For instance, if a person

successfully completes the entire series of Laubach skill books but, after enrolling, drops out of the community college GED program, his stated goal of a GED certainly has not been met even though his reading skills have greatly improved. Even with a tracking system in place, the process of evaluation is never going to be the tidy process that we imagined when we began. The reading level of every student is tested when he comes into the program, and the coordinator has recently instituted another test after 50 hours of tutoring. Compilation of such statistics lies ahead of us. At the same time, we have realized the necessity for learning more about <u>why</u> students drop out; one of the board members is now in the process of writing a proposal for a grant to fund research in this area.

Finally, we learned that work begets the need for more work! With the addition of the coordinator, and programs set in motion, the workload kept growing--so that as more things were done, the more there was to do. All this leads to a certain frustration level for the coordinator who always gives far more than the normal working hours to the project but, at the same time, has a growing realization of the needs that remain.

Against this perspective, let me talk in more positive terms about the year's accomplishments toward our overall goal of building a strong independent literacy program that will survive after the grant periods are over. These accomplishments include not just the things we said we would

do but also the development of a number of means and techniques not mentioned specifically in our grant proposal.

First, the addition of a coordinator has meant a more adept and active board of directors for the literacy council. By-laws have been revised to insure rotational terms on the board. The coordinator has arranged meetings for the board on long range planning, grant proposal writing, and fund raising for members. As a result, the board members are far more aware of their individual roles in directing the council than ever before and have begun assuming these roles.

Second, the coordinator has been responsible for strengthening the linkages mentioned above. Since December 1988 she has been chairman of the county's inter-agency council made up of representatives of the various human services agencies in the community, from the county social services department to the Employment Security Commission. She has established contacts in a variety of businesses and agencies that have meant much closer working relationships with these groups. The liaison with the local ABE program is far stronger than it was at the beginning of the grant period, with most instructors in the program referring students reading below fourth grade level to the council for one-on-one tutoring. The director of the ABE program serves as an ex-officio member of the council board. The vast majority of the students served by the council are referred by teachers, counselors, or supervisors in human service

agencies or businesses. These referrals are an indication of the coordinator's strong role as liaison between the council and these agencies. In building these linkages she has also increased community awareness of the council's work and the importance of the service it renders to the community.

During 1989 there has been a county-wide effort to deal with recent manufacturing job losses in the county. A massive program was instituted to look at strengths, weaknesses and needs of the community for industrial recruitment. The literacy services coordinator was asked to serve on a technical committee looking at educational levels and needs of the workforce. That committee is now in the process of analyzing the results of a questionnaire submitted to all the employees of the major manufacturers in the county. The information from the questionnaire will be more precise than census figures which, to date, have been our only source of information about educational levels and will be very useful in the council's long range planning.

Under the leadership of the literacy services coordinator the council has changed its focus to include not just adults but also children whose literacy skills prohibit their progressing in school and lead to their dropping out. At the same time, many of these children's parents often are functionally illiterate. By working with the schools to identify and provide help to these families, the program is addressing the inter-generational nature of illiteracy. She arranged for a meeting between key school personnel and the

literacy council to explore ways to utilize volunteer tutors for children considered to be at risk of dropping out because of poor literacy skills. She has talked at parent involvement meetings organized by the schools for parents of at risk students. As a result, this year 11 summer school students were tutored by council volunteers, and just now there are contacts being made with all elementary school principals stressing the availability of volunteer tutors for at-risk students and their parents.

Already the coordinator has experimented with one inter-generational program. She, the library's children's services coordinator, and local Head Start personnel mounted a program for Head Start parents designed to improve their literacy skills through learning to read to their children. Modelled on the successful North Carolina program, Motheread, our Parentread was aimed at improving the adults' reading skills and, at the same time, exposing their children to reading at an early age. Twenty parents expressed an interest in the program; 12 signed up for weekly classes that ran for 3 months. Only 5 completed the classes, after which the staff undertook an evaluation, the results of which are being used to plan another series of classes this year.

The coordinator has worked not just to increase the number of students but also to improve the methods of instruction. The volunteer program depends primarily on the Laubach teaching materials which are almost exclusively

urban based. The coordinator and tutors have worked to produce supplemental curriculum materials that relate more to the lives of the rural Appalachian students. During 1989 she headed a council committee of volunteers who worked with a grant from the North Carolina Center for Literacy Development to produce 3 volumes of stories and exercises related to western North Carolina. Copies of these volumes are now available for use by all tutors and students.

She conducted 3 tutor training workshops for volunteers as well as 3 refresher courses for tutors. At the same time, she has served as the trainer for 2 volunteer tutor trainers--so that now the council has its own qualified tutor trainers, thereby adding to its self sufficiency.

She applied for and received 3 grants for the council: one of $2,500, a matching grant from the Janirve foundation, matched by another one of $3,000 from the NC General Assembly, for the purpose of an office computer; another in the amount of $1,000 from the Josephus Daniels Foundation for office and teaching materials. Finally, along with the council president, she has been responsible for securing donations for the council from local civic organizations and county and municipal governments that enable the council to share a portion of the coordinator's salary this year.

While we did not meet the numerical goal for the number of students set down in our grant proposal in 1987, we have seen the visibility and viability of the literacy program

increase greatly. We have learned a lot about what works and does not work for us, seen the literacy council board assume a more active, vigorous role in the functioning of the council, seen local funding increase, and built additional bridges to the community. The nurturing role the library has been able to play for the independent literacy council as a result of TITLE VI funding has been the crucial factor in this progress. It seems to us a good and proper role for small public libraries in serving communities where volunteer literacy programs do not exist or need this type of support to sustain themselves.

Our budget changed little from original estimates of needs:

| | Proposed | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries | $20,000 | $20,298 |
| Fringe Benefits | 2,264 | 1,524 |
| Travel | 1,000 | 1,047 |
| TOTAL | $23,264 | $22,869 |